



**PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION
Minutes of Regular Meeting of October 2, 2019
City Council Chambers, One Twin Pines Lane, Belmont, CA**

CALL TO ORDER: 7:00 PM.

ROLL CALL

Commissioners Present: Block, Foehr, Fox, Lyford, Michaels, Mittelstadt

Commissioner Absent: Cotten

Youth Commissioners Present: Dai, Sanders

Staff Present: Parks and Recreation Director Shearer, Office Assistant II Gonzalez

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Led by Chair Michaels.

COMMISSIONER ANNOUNCEMENTS / AGENDA AMENDMENTS

Commissioner Foehr announced Carlmont High School had a successful community event and the Save the Music (STM) Festival and Waterdog Run were coming up. Commissioner Mittelstadt added that the History Room would be open during STM.

Commissioner Sanders said the Youth Advisory Committee held their first meeting and had twenty members excluding the youth commissioners.

Commissioner Michaels said there was a great Movie in the Park with the new movie screen.

CONSENT CALENDAR

September 4, 2019 Draft Minutes

ACTION: On a motion by Commissioner Michaels seconded by Commissioner Foehr, the minutes were unanimously approved (6-0, Commissioner Cotten absent).

ITEMS OF BUSINESS

Facility Rental Report

Recreation Coordinator Carina Cortes reviewed the available rental sites, site improvements, various rental data, event photos, 2019 festivals, and rental challenges. She also suggested changes to the Facility Use Policy: require that reservations end by 12am (instead of 1am), update insurance and security requirements, evaluate alcohol requirements, simplify rental group definitions, streamline the special equipment permitting process, require a cleaning fee for larger events, and consider a weekend pricing differential. Cortes plans to bring a draft policy to the Commission in the future.

Commissioners shared questions and comments.

- Commissioner Block thanked Cortes for her work and encouraged her to make the rental process simpler for staff, such as building in the cleaning fee. Cortes confirmed there had been no fights during her tenure and that neighboring cities generally ended rentals by 12am.

- Commissioner Foehr appreciated the data presented and asked if high school students could help with staffing issues, though Cortes said staff was required to be at least 18 years old.
- In response to Commissioner Fox, Cortes said ten staff would be ideal. She also explained when security was required and said decorations she might recommend the City offer renters were large outdoor tents as well as string lights for the Lodge patio.
- In response to Commissioner Mittelstadt, Cortes said she believed the percentage of resident vs. non-resident rentals remained consistent throughout the year. She also confirmed residents could rent 12 months in advance—2 months sooner than non-residents. Mittelstadt asked if higher wages would attract more staff and Cortes said recent wage increases and the weekend differential had helped.
- In response to Foehr, Cortes confirmed the City retains deposits when policies are violated.
- In response to Commissioner Lyford, Cortes said rentals had been consistent over the past year and the Sports Complex was occasionally rented twice per day, but this required either custodial be scheduled between events or the second renter accept the facility as-is.
- Commissioner Dai commended Cortes for overseeing a high volume of events with only five staff and suggested soundproofing to mitigate noise complaints. In response to Dai, Cortes said the wear on the buildings and equipment seemed in-line with their high-volume use. Cortes explained why the Manor was marketed for adult events, adding she hopes website improvements will encourage more use. Mittelstadt mentioned the lower utilization could also be due to the lack of a kitchen.
- Commissioner Sanders recommended utilizing volunteers to alleviate staffing challenges.
- Commissioner Michaels expressed an interest in determining how many rental opportunities were missed (though Shearer said this would be hard since people could check availability online). Michaels also recommended ending alcohol consumption prior to the event end; analyzing picnic area utilization by season; offering renters text reminders during events; renting out sports equipment at the Sports Complex; posting signage outside facilities telling the public that the space is rentable; offering the City's reservation system to other rental providers, such as NDNU, for a fee; throwing an open house in the Manor for event planners; and utilizing the Manor for adult recreation programming.
- In response to Mittelstadt, Cortes said a good number of events went until 1am, especially at the Senior and Community Center, which also received the most noise complaints.

Update on 2019 Pilot Off-Leash Hours at Barrett Community Center

Commissioner Foehr recused herself from discussion due to a conflict of interest.

Director Shearer provided an overview of the two-year pilot program and recommended the off-leash dog hours be formally established and enforced. She said the program fostered a great community of dog owners and they also did a better job of picking up waste in the program's second year. There were some issues with field use during winter closures, so this year staff will put an A-frame on the field during closures as well as update the City website. Overall, the program is a good compromise between youth sports, who saw more wear on the field, and dog owners, who wanted to extend off-leash hours.

Commissioners shared questions and comments.

- Commissioner Mittelstadt expressed support for the change in program status. Commissioner Lyford agreed and added that there had been a lot more self-policing recently and there was a better sense of community than Cipriani Dog Park.

- Commissioner Dai inquired about procedures when someone defied posted off-leash hours; Shearer said it is mostly on the honor system, but when evening hours ended for the year, signs were posted, and code enforcement periodically reminded people.
- In response to Commissioner Sanders, Shearer said the only pushback she received was one comment from a park visitor with children who encountered someone with an off-leash dog during undesignated hours. In addition, the gate has needed some repairs and a second wastebasket was recommended, but there hadn't been any noise complaints.
- In response to Commissioner Block, Shearer confirmed that once formalized, program revisions would go to City Council, though they could be referred back to the Commission.
- Block expressed concerns about the long-term impact on grass quality and suggested improving Cipriani Dog Park to attract more use there as well.
- In response to Commissioner Fox, Shearer said formalizing the pilot program would require revised signage.
- Commissioner Michaels reminded staff to think about dogs in the context of the Parks and Open Space Master Plan. He also recommended outsourcing a monthly grounds "rehab," offering text notifications for field closures, adding the person-to-dog ratio to signage, installing a double entrance, renting the field to dog training services (which Shearer recommended for Cipriani instead), and contacting dog walking services to share City rules. In response to Michaels, Shearer said staff considered making the off-leash hours certain weeks of the year, but ultimately decided hard dates were easier to understand.
- Mittelstadt urged staff to minimize site improvements until the plan for the Belmont Community Center was established.

ACTION: On a motion by Commissioner Lyford, seconded by Commissioner Fox, the Commission unanimously recommended to City Council and the City Manager that the City formalizes the off-leash dog hours pilot program at Barrett Community Center (5-0, Commissioner Cotten absent and Commissioner Foehr abstained).

Foehr reentered the room.

Belmont Sports Complex Synthetic Turf Project Update

Director Shearer announced the City is still working with the County on financing, she is reviewing the final plans with the City engineer, and she hopes to get City Council approval at the October 22 meeting. She confirmed only the Regional Quality Control Board needed to see the final plans.

Open Space Trail Signage Committee

Director Shearer explained the need for new trail signage and proposed the formation of a committee for roughly six months to develop a Request for Proposals, help select a consultant, and help design new signage. This signage was budgeted for FY20 and would include an updated trail map as well as trail markers for the City's open space.

Commissioners shared questions and comments.

- In response to Commissioner Foehr, Shearer confirmed the signs could incorporate design elements (such as font and color) being selected for other new signage throughout Belmont.
- Commissioner Michaels suggested utilizing technology to "game-ify" the use of the open space and Shearer mentioned another city used the "Easy2Hike" app.

- Commissioner Lyford recommended identifying which trails were for hikers versus bikers, but Commissioner Block preferred to keep all trails multiuse, easing tensions between different user groups by offering bike bells.
- Commissioner Fox suggested using the Presidio's signage in San Francisco as an example.
- Michaels recommended limiting the committee's scope and incorporating trail signage into the Parks and Open Space Master Plan. Shearer confirmed the Master Plan is scheduled out to bid in early 2020, but expressed an immediate, safety need for updated signage.
- Michaels suggested enlisting Eagle Scouts to help install signage and Commissioner Block said existing heat maps could simplify mapping efforts.

Shearer said she would bring the item back to the Commission in November, after determining whether Commissioners who live adjacent to the open space are allowed to serve on the committee.

Commission Calendar

Director Shearer reviewed the November agenda, added trail signage, and mentioned the tree succession plan may be postponed. After discussion, Shearer said she would let the Commission know whether there would be an additional November meeting to receive the Belmont Community Center Conceptual Design Update in conjunction with the Planning Commission.

OTHER BUSINESS / UPDATES

Department Report

Director Shearer announced the Community Advisory Committee (CAC) met to discuss Belmont Community Center's indoor space allocations and locations, resulting in two recommendations. The CAC's final meeting will be held October 24, 2019, and the final recommended design, phasing options, and cost estimates will go to City Council in November.

Shearer presented department highlights: the preschool enjoyed a petting zoo and story time at the library, there was a music and dance performance at the Senior and Community Center, a volunteer day in Twin Pines Park was scheduled for April 25, a new parklet was created at the top of Hallmark Drive, Footsteps held their annual Fun, Fit Family Day, followed by a department movie screening, Afshin Oskoui was appointed City Manager, and October events will include: pickleball, a movie night at The Hideout, the Save the Music festival, and the Belmont Waterdog Run.

Commissioner Questions and Comments

Commissioner Fox recommended including presenting staff's names on the agenda. In response to Commissioner Michaels, Director Shearer said she spoke with the resident who expressed concerns about the new outdoor workout equipment at Barrett and no other complaints had been received.

ADJOURNMENT: 9:08 PM.

Brigitte Shearer
Parks and Recreation Director